



Meeting **GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date **Wednesday 2 May 2018 (commencing at 10.30 am)**

membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Bruce Laughton (Chairman)
Andy Sissons (Vice-Chairman)

Nicki Brooks
Steve Carr
Kate Foale
Tony Harper **A**
Errol Henry JP

Rachel Madden A
John Longdon
Phil Rostance
Keith Walker

OTHER COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Mrs Cutts MBE

Councillor Alan Rhodes

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Paul McKay Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection

Rob Disney Keith Ford Jayne Francis-Ward Jo Kirkby Keith Palframan Nigel Stevenson	}	Resources
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OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Charles Daybell – Independent Person

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 March 2018, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Rachel Madden.

The following temporary changes of membership, for this meeting only, were reported:-

- Councillor John Longdon had replaced Councillor Mike Quigley;
- Councillor Keith Walker had replaced Councillor John Handley.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

4. COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE – CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Jayne Francis-Ward (Corporate Director, Resources) introduced the report which sought Members' views on the draft response to consultation on the review of local government ethical standards.

During discussions, Members supported the draft response and raised the following issues as aspects that required further consideration nationally:-

- the need to ensure that the outcomes of this review were reflected in the updated Code of Conduct for Councillors and Co-opted Members;
- the importance of allowing Councillors as well as officers to raise concerns anonymously within any Whistleblowing procedures (as per the County Council's current arrangements);
- whether Members who had declared a private and non-pecuniary interest in an agenda item should be allowed to remain in the meeting to discuss and vote on that item, as per the current rules.

Charles Daybell, one of the Council's Independent Persons, felt that it would be helpful if the Independent Persons could submit an annual report to Full Council to give assurance that the existing systems were working correctly. In response it was underlined that Councils could choose to operate such practice aside from any requirements from the Committee for Standards in Public Life.

RESOLVED: 2018/017

- 1) That the response be finalised, with reference to issues raised by Members.
- 2) That authority to finalise the draft response be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with this Committee's Chairman.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO) DECISIONS – FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2018

Jo Kirkby (Team Manager – Complaints and Information Team) introduced the report which detailed the LGO complaint decisions received in February and March 2018.

During discussions, Members queried how lessons learnt from such investigations were shared across the Council. It was clarified that the annual letter from the LGO, which would be submitted to this Committee, would highlight trends and issues as well as benchmarking numbers of investigations against other Councils. Members could also request specific updates on individual cases where relevant.

RESOLVED: 2018/018

That the annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for Members' consideration.

6. LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017-18

Rob Disney (Head of Internal Audit) introduced the report which reviewed the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance and sought approval for the Annual Governance Statement. Mr Disney highlighted that the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance would be updated further to lose reference to the Council's former Conduct Committee with that body's remit in future being undertaken by a sub-committee of Governance and Ethics Committee.

RESOLVED: 2018/019

- 1) That the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved, subject to deleting the reference to the Conduct Committee.
- 2) That the Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 be approved.

7. FOLLOW-UP OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Rob Disney (Head of Internal Audit) introduced the report which reported progress with the implementation of agreed management actions to address Internal Audit recommendations.

RESOLVED: 2018/020

That no further, more detailed updates on progress on specific issues were required at this stage.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S BRIBERY AND FRAUD PREVENTION WORKBOOK FOR COUNCILLORS

Rob Disney (Head of Internal Audit) introduced the report which highlighted the introduction of this new workbook by the Local Government Association.

RESOLVED: 2018/021

That the workbook be issued to all County Councillors.

9. MANDATORY INQUIRIES – 2017-18 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Keith Palframan (Group Manager, Finance Strategy and Compliance) introduced the report which informed the Committee about the External Auditors' requirements for information about the Council's approach to dealing with fraud, litigation, laws and regulations as part of their audit of the Council's accounts and sought Members' views on the draft response to the Inquiries for Those charged with Governance (that is, the Governance and Ethics Committee).

RESOLVED: 2018/022

That the response to the Inquiries for Those Charged with Governance be submitted to the External Auditors.

10. REVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES STAFFING STRUCTURE

Jayne Francis-Ward (Corporate Director – Resources) introduced the report which outlined the findings of the review of the revised staffing structure and proposed further amendments to better meet current and future demand.

RESOLVED: 2018/023

- 1) That the revised staffing structure for Democratic Services be approved.
- 2) That the revised staffing structure be reviewed after twelve months to ensure business needs are being appropriately met, with a report submitted to the Committee if that review determines that further changes are required.
- 3) That a request be made to the Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee to approve a contingency allocation of £73,894.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2018/024

That the work programme be agreed, with no further changes required at this stage.

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

CHAIRMAN